4.3.2.8 Socioeconomics

This section analyzes the socioeconomic effects of the Pu conversion facility for each of the candidate sites. Only the sites with the greatest socioeconomic effects are discussed. The effects at all candidate sites are found in the Supplemental Socioeconomic Data Report (Socio 1996a).

Regional Economy Characteristics. Constructing a Pu conversion facility at any of the sites analyzed would generate employment and income increases within the affected REA. Constructing the facility would require 358 workers during the peak year of construction at any site. The largest increase in regional employment (less than 1 percent) among the sites analyzed would be at INEL. A total of 727 new jobs (358 direct and 369 indirect) would be generated and regional unemployment would fall from 5.4 percent to 4.9 percent. The largest increase in regional per capita income would also occur at INEL during the construction of the facility, but the increase would be much less than 1 percent over No Action (Socio 1996a).

Operating the facility would generate greater socioeconomic changes than would construction, due to the larger, more permanent workforce. A workforce of 883 would be required for full operation at any site. Implementing the alternative at INEL would generate the largest changes in regional employment (about 2 percent) and per capita income (about 1 percent). A total of 3,251 new jobs (883 direct and 2,368 indirect) would be created by the operational activities, and INEL regional unemployment would fall to 3.7 percent (Socio 1996a).

Population and Housing. At all of the sites analyzed, construction employment requirements would be met by the available resident labor force, but some in-migrating workers would be needed to fill more specialized positions during operations. Locating the facility at Pantex would induce the largest population increase among the sites analyzed. However, project-related immigration would increase the ROI population by only about 1 percent over No Action population projections. Housing units, in excess of existing vacancies, may be required at all of the sites analyzed, except NTS and ORR, to accommodate the population growth. The greatest increase would occur in the INEL ROI, but this would be less than 1 percent over No Action projections. Historic housing construction rates indicate that there would be sufficient housing units available to accommodate the population growth at all of the sites analyzed (Socio 1996a).

Community Services. During construction, there would be minimal impacts to community services in the ROIs of any of the sites analyzed. However, operation of the facility would slightly increase the demand for community services. The effects of population growth due to in-migrating workers during operations would be minor at all sites analyzed. The following discussion focuses on the Pantex and INEL ROIs, which would experience the greatest increases in demand for community services.

To maintain the No Action student-to-teacher ratio of 16.3:1 in the Pantex ROI, 19 new teachers would be needed during operation of the proposed facility. The increase in teacher requirements, however, would be distributed over several school districts in the ROI; therefore, no single school district would be significantly affected (Socio 1996a).

To maintain the No Action service level of 1.6 sworn police officers per 1,000 persons in the INEL ROI, 2 new officers would be needed. Four additional firefighters would be required to sustain the No Action service level of 2.3 firefighters per 1,000 persons in the Pantex ROI (Socio 1996a).

Projected hospital occupancy rates would increase slightly over No Action levels. However, projected capacities would be capable of accommodating these small increases in patient load. To maintain the No Action service level of 2.0 physicians per 1,000 persons, 3 additional physicians would be needed in the Pantex ROI during full operation (Socio 1996a).

Local Transportation. Traffic generated from construction of the Pu conversion facility would not affect the level of service on the local road segments analyzed at any of the sites. However, traffic generated during

operations at INEL would cause a drop in the level of service on one road segment. U.S. 20/26 from U.S. 26 East to ID 22/33 would drop from level of service B to C (Socio 1996a).